

Version with Markings to Show Changes Made

16. (Twice Amended) A method for accessing a secured voice message in a single mailbox of a telephone answering device, comprising:

prompting a user of said telephone answering device to enter an authorized security code on a voice message-by-voice message basis for [secured] voice messages secured by a calling party;

comparing an entered authorized security code to at least one pre-stored authorized security code accessible by said telephone answering device; and

upon matching said entered authorized security code with said at least one pre-stored authorized security code, allowing said user access to an underlying voice message secured in a single mailbox of said telephone answering device.

17. (Twice Amended) The method for accessing a secured voice message in a single mailbox of a telephone answering device according to claim 16, further comprising:

entering said authorized security code for each [secured] of said voice messages.

23. (Twice Amended) Apparatus for accessing a secured voice message in a single mailbox of a telephone answering device, comprising:

means for prompting a user of said telephone answering device to enter an authorized security code on a voice message-by-voice message basis for [secured] voice messages secured by a calling party;

means for comparing an entered authorized security code to at least one pre-stored authorized security code accessible by said telephone answering device [voice messaging system]; and

means for allowing said user access to an underlying voice message secured in a single mailbox, upon matching said entered authorized security code with said at least one pre-stored authorized security code.

24. (Twice Amended) The apparatus for accessing a secured voice message in a single mailbox of a telephone answering device according to claim 23, further comprising:

means for entering said authorized security code for each [secured] of said voice messages.

REMARKS

Claims 16, 17, 23 and 24 are amended herein. Claims 1-24 remain pending in the application.

Priority of Application 09/314,966

The Examiner rejected the Applicants' claim of priority to Patent No. 6,335,962.

The Applicants' are hereby withdrawing the claim of priority to Patent No. 6,335,962. The rejection is now moot. The Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

35 USC 112 Second Paragraph Rejection of Claims 31-33

The Office Action rejected claims 3, 15, 22 and 23 as allegedly being indefinite under 35 USC 112. In particular, the claims 3, 15 and 22 were rejected for lacking antecedent basis for "said calling party". Claim 23 was rejected for lacking antecedent basis for "said voice messaging system".

Claims 3, 15 and 22 are respectively dependent on independent claims 1, 11 and 18. Claims 1, 11 and 18 each recite, inter alia, a party calling a telephone answering device. Claims 3, 15 and 22 only recite a single party making a call. Therefore, "said calling party" refers back to "a party calling a telephone answering device".

Claim 23 has been reviewed and is amended where appropriate. It is respectfully submitted that the claim is now in full conformance with 35 USC 112.

It is respectfully requested that the rejections of claims 3, 15, 22 and 23 be withdrawn.

Claims 1-5, 7, 9 and 10 over Moganti

In the Office Action, claims 1-5, 7, 9 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Moganti, U.S. Patent No. 6,229,878 ("Moganti"). The Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claims 1-5, 7, 9 and 10 recite, *inter alia*, a secured message authorization module adapted to allow a party calling a telephone answering device to separately secure in a single mailbox a voice message for access only by a user authorized to play back the voice message.

Moganti appears to teach an improved telephone answering device that uses a personal computer or work station to analyze incoming caller data (Abstract). The computer can be programmed to selectively record calls from a particular number or particular numbers as a group (Moganti, col. 3, lines 29-32). Calls from a particular number could be batched and stored together on a storage media for subsequent retrieval by a subscriber (Moganti, col. 3, lines 32-34). Messages stored on an approved answering machine system could be retrieved from a remote location by entering a predetermined security code (Moganti, col. 4, lines 39-55).

Moganti teaches a caller calls a computer with telephone answering functions and leaves a message. Subsequently, a caller can retrieve messages stored on the computer by entering a security code. The messages are made secure by the computer for remote access. Monganti fails to teach giving a party calling the option to secure in a voice message for access only by a user authorized to play back the message, as claimed by claims 1-5, 7, 9 and 10.

A benefit of allowing a calling party to secure a voice message is, e.g., increased privacy for the voice message. Households typically rely on a single telephone answering device (TAD) for everyone in the house. Conventionally, all of the messages are accessible by everyone within the house. If a caller wants to leave a personal voice message for a single person within the house, conventionally this is not an option without the use of multiple mailboxes. With the Applicants' invention, a party calling a TAD can secure a voice message for only a single party to listen to the message, i.e., the listening party that knows the security code. Therefore, a single TAD can privately serve many persons within a single household.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claims 1-5, 7, 9 and 10 are patentable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request that the foregoing rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 1-7 and 9-24 over Nabkel

In the Office Action, claims 1-7 and 9-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Nabkel, U.S. Patent No. 5,963,626 (“Nabkel”). The Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claims 1-7, 9 and 10 recite, *inter alia*, a secured message authorization module adapted to allow a party calling a telephone answering device to separately secure in a single mailbox a voice message for access only by a user authorized to play back the voice message. Claims 11-15 and 18-22 recite, *inter alia*, upon matching an entered authorized security code entered by a party calling a telephone answering device with at least one pre-stored authorized security code, securing in a single mailbox a recorded voice message for access only by a user authorized to play back a voice message.

Nabkel appears to disclose a method and system for generating and posting a message to callers based on a caller's identity (Abstract). The identity of the calling party is based on the calling party's calling number and optional personal identification number (PIN) (Nabkel, Abstract). A subscriber to a messaging system is prompted to enter an ID number of the calling party belonging to a list, and further may be prompted to enter a PIN number associated with the ID number for very private communications (Nabkel, col. 2, lines 58-65). A subscriber may also specify security parameters for a communication, such as a PIN associated with a message or a personal PIN associated with a specific individual (Nabkel, col. 3, lines 53-58). A calling party is prompted to enter a PIN and a determination is made as to whether or not the calling party is authorized to receive a personal communication (Nabkel, col. 4, lines 41-45). If so, the authorized personal communication is played/presented to the caller (Nabkel, col. 4, lines 45-47).

Nabkel's system allows a subscriber to the messaging system to add a security parameter for a communication, such as a PIN associated with a

message or a personal PIN associated with a specific individual. Nabkel fails to teach allowing a party calling to secure a voice message, much less a party calling a telephone answering device to separately secure in a single mailbox a voice message for access only by a user authorized to play back the voice message, as claimed by claims 1-7, 9-15 and 18-22.

As discussed above, a benefit of allowing a calling party to secure a voice message is, e.g., increased privacy for the voice message. Households typically rely on a single telephone answering device (TAD) for everyone in the house. Conventionally, all of the messages are accessible by everyone within the house. If a caller wants to leave a personal voice message for a single person within the house, conventionally this is not an option. With the Applicant's invention, a party calling a TAD can secure a voice message for only a single party to listen to the message, i.e., the listening party that knows the security code. Therefore, a single TAD can privately serve many persons within a single household.

Claims 16, 17, 23 and 24 recite, inter alia, prompting a user of a telephone answering device to enter an authorized security code on a voice message-by-voice message basis for voice messages secured by a calling party.

Nabkel teaches repeated entry of a PIN for access to messages stored in a messaging system. The PIN entered by the caller is a PIN assigned to the caller for remote access to the messages. Nabkel fails to teach voice messages secured by a calling party, much less prompting a user of a telephone answering device to enter an authorized security code on a voice message-by-voice message basis for voice messages secured by a calling party, as claimed by claims 16, 17, 23 and 24.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claims 1-7 and 9-24 are patentable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request that the foregoing rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 2, 7 and 9 over Ali

In the Office Action, claims 1, 2, 7 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Ali et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,335,962 (“Ali”). The Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claims 1, 2, 7 and 9 recite, *inter alia*, a secured message authorization module adapted to allow **a party calling** a telephone answering device to separately secure in a single mailbox a voice message for access only by a user authorized to play back the voice message.

Ali appears to disclose a voice messaging system and method that includes a voice/playback device to store a plurality of voice messages associated with a respective plurality of incoming calls (Abstract). The voice messages may be automatically routed to individual voice mailboxes in accordance with the assigned grouping (Ali, col. 7, lines 15-18). An ID information grouping directory may include a list of call related information relating to incoming calls which is used to route to particular voice mailboxes (Ali, col. 7, lines 19-20).

Ali discloses organizing a plurality of voice messages in individual voice mailboxes. Ali fails to disclose giving a **party calling** the option to secure a voice message for access only by a user authorized to play back the message, as claimed by claims 1, 2, 7 and 9.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claims 1, 2, 7 and 9 are patentable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request that the foregoing rejection be withdrawn.

Claim 8 over Nabkel in view of Johanson

In the Office Action, claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Nabkel in view of Johanson et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,215,860 (“Johanson”). The Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 8 is dependent on claim 1, and is allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

Moreover, claim 8 recites, *inter alia*, each of a plurality of voice messages stored in a voice message memory includes header information, the header information including a secure status of the voice message.

The Office Action correctly acknowledges that Nabkel fails to teach a voice message that includes a header containing a secure status of the voice message. The Office Action relies on Johanson to allegedly make up for the deficiencies in Nabkel to arrive at the claimed invention. The Applicants respectfully disagree.

Johanson appears to teach a digital answering machine, electronic voice mail system, or any other voice messaging system integrating both non-speech data with associated speech data in common memory (Abstract). A message table is utilized that contains one sector of conventional speech memory (Johanson, col. 2, lines 13-14). The message table contains various header information relating to an underlying speech message (Johanson, col. 2, lines 14-17). Conventional header type information includes a time/date stamp and user defined data (TAG) (Johanson, col. 2, lines 17-20).

Johanson teaches a header of an associated speech message contains time/data stamp data and TAG data. Johanson fails to disclose, teach or suggest each of a plurality of voice messages stored in a voice message memory includes header information, the header information including a secure status of the voice message, as claimed by claim 8.

Neither Nabkel or Johanson, either alone or in combination, disclose, teach or suggest each of a plurality of voice messages stored in a voice message memory includes header information, the header information including a secure status of the voice message, as claimed by claim 8.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 8 is patentable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request that the foregoing rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 11-15 and 18-22 over Moganti in view of Lee

In the Office Action, claims 11-15 and 18-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Moganti, U.S. Patent No.

6,229,878 (“Moganti”) in view of Lee, U.S. Patent No. 5,604,791 (“Lee”). The Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claims 11-15 and 18-22 recite, *inter alia*, upon matching an entered authorized security code entered by a party calling a telephone answering device with at least one pre-stored authorized security code, securing in a single mailbox a recorded voice message for access only by a user authorized to play back a voice message.

As discussed above, Moganti appears to teach an improved telephone answering device that uses a personal computer or work station to analyze incoming caller data (Abstract). The computer can be programmed to selectively record calls from a particular number or particular numbers as a group (Moganti, col. 3, lines 29-32). Calls from a particular number could be batched and stored together on a storage media for subsequent retrieval by a subscriber (Moganti, col. 3, lines 32-34). Messages stored on an approved answering machine system could be retrieved from a remote location by entering a predetermined security code (Moganti, col. 4, lines 39-55).

The Office Action correctly acknowledges that Moganti fails to teach prompting a calling party to enter a security code. The Office Action relies on Lee to allegedly make up for the deficiencies in Moganti to arrive at the claimed invention. The Applicants respectfully disagree.

Lee appears to teach a telephone answering device which prompts a calling party to enter a telephone number (col. 12, lines 53-58). The telephone number is used to generate a code, the code is compared to authorized codes (Lee, col. 13, lines 13-20). The call is processed according to the generated code (Lee, col. 13, lines 59-67; col. 14, lines 8-12 and 21-27).

Moganti teaches a caller calls a computer with telephone answering functions and leaves a message. Subsequently, a caller can retrieve messages stored on the computer by entering a security code. The messages are made secure by the computer for remote access. Monganti fails to teach giving a party calling the option to secure in a voice message for access only by a user authorized to play back the message, as claimed by claims 11-15 and 18-22.

Neither Moganti nor Lee, either alone or in combination, disclose, teach or suggest upon matching an entered authorized security code entered by a party calling a telephone answering device with at least one pre-stored authorized security code, securing in a single mailbox a recorded voice message for access only by a user authorized to play back a voice message, as claimed by claims 11-15 and 18-22.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claims 11-15 and 18-22 are patentable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request that the foregoing rejection be withdrawn.

Conclusion

All objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the subject application is in condition for allowance and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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